

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0060

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EC
SUBJECT: NEW ECUADOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER: DR. JORGE DIEGO
SALVADOR LARA

1. DR. JORGE DIEGO SALVADOR LARA ASSUMED THE OFFICE OF
FOREIGN MINISTER ON DEC. 31, 1976, UPON THE RETIREMENT OF
DR. ARMANDO PESANTES FROM THAT POSITION. PESANTES' RETIREMENT
WAS OBLIGATORY AFTER HIS 40 YEARS OF SERVICE IN THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY. SALVADOR AND PESANTES ARE REPORTED TO BE CLOSE PER-
SONAL FRIENDS, AND PESANTES IS BELIEVED TO HAVE SOLICITED AND/
OR RECEIVED SALVADOR'S VIEWS ON IMPORTANT FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES.

2. DR. SALVADOR WAS FOREIGN MINISTER IN 1966 DURING THE
INTERIM PRESIDENCY OF CLEMENTE YEROVI. HE HAD PREVIOUSLY
SERVED IN THE FOREIGN SERVICE (1953-60) IN PERU, CHILE, AND
IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS. WHILE FOREIGN MINISTER
HE ELOQUENTLY DEFENDED ECUADOR'S POSITION ON ITS BORDER PROBLEM
WITH PERU, AND HE WAS CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH DEVELOPING
ECUADOR'S CLAIM TO A 200-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA.

3. ALTHOUGH IN RECENT YEARS HE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN RELA-
TIVELY APOLITICAL, IN THE 1960'S SALVADOR WAS ACTIVE IN
THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. HE WAS ELECTED A CONSERVATIVE DEPUTY
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FOR PICHINCHA PROVINCE (1962-64), DURING WHICH TIME HE WAS
A LEADER OF THE ANTI-ROSEMENA FORCES. IN 1967 HE RAN
FOR MAYOR OF QUITO, BUT WAS DEFEATED. SALVADOR WAS ONCE
ASSOCIATED WITH THE RIGHT-WING AND SUPER-NATIONALISTIC
ARNE PARTY, WHICH HAS A NUMBER OF ADHERENTS IN THE FOREIGN
MINISTRY.

4. SINCE LEAVING THE FOREIGN MINISTRY IN 1966, SALVADOR HAS BEEN COUNSEL OF THE ECUADOREAN HOUSING BANK. HE HAS ALSO TAUGHT AT CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY AND AT THE ELOY ALFARO MILITARY ACADEMY.

5. SALVADOR WAS BORN IN QUITO IN 1926. HE WAS TRAINED IN LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES. HE RECEIVED HIS DOCTORATE IN JURISPRUDENCE IN 1959. HE IS CONSIDERED EXTREMELY WELL-READ AND CULTURED, ALTHOUGH HE IS UNINFORMED ON ECONOMIC MATTERS. HE HAS PUBLISHED A NUMBER OF WORKS OF A HISTORICAL OR LEGAL NATURE. HE HAS A PERSONAL AVOCATION FOR ARCHEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY. SALVADOR IS MARRIED AND HAS FIVE CHILDREN. HE IS REPORTEDLY A DVOUT CATHOLIC. HE DOES NOT SPEAK ENGLISH.

6. SALVADOR HAS ON SOME OCCASIONS BEEN, FROM AN HISPANIDAD POINT OF VIEW, A CRITIC OF THE US, ACCUSING US OF ECONOMIC IMPERIALISM AND NEOCOLONIALISM (AND OF DIRECT COLONIALISM IN THE CASE OF PUERTO RICO), OF STILL USING THE "BIG STICK," OF BREAKING BASIC MORAL NORMS, AND OF "GALLOPING CORRUPTION." DESPITE THESE CRITICISMS, HOWEVER, SALVADOR THINKS THAT THE OVERALL CONTRIBUTION OF THE US TO THE LATIN AMERICAN CAUSE IS POSITIVE BECAUSE OF THE TREMENDOUS IMPACT OUR SUCCESSFUL REVOLUTION HAD ON LATIN AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. SALVADOR SEEMS TO BE MOST ORIENTED TOWARD LATIN AMERICA, AND HE GOES SO FAR AS TO CLAIM THAT THE 21ST CENTURY WILL BE "THE CENTURY OF THE HISPANIC COMMUNITY OF NATIONS." ALSO, INTERESTINGLY, HE IS A FIRM SUPPORTER OF ISRAEL AND THE ISRAELI CAUSE. HE IS A PAST PRESIDENT

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OF THE LOCAL ECUADOREAN/ISRAELI CULTURAL INSTITUTE. HE HAS INDICATED THAT HE OPPOSED THE CURRENT UNFAVORABLE ECUADOREAN UN STAND ON ISSUES AFFECTING ISRAEL (PARTICULARLY THE "OCCUPIED TERRITORY" RESOLUTIONS).

7. COMMENT: ECUADOR'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP WAS CLEARLY DISPLEASED WITH PESANTES' MANAGEMENT OF THE FONOFF WHEN IT CAME TO ADDRESSING QUESTIONS INVOLVING CHILE AND THE US, BOTH CONSIDERED VITAL ELEMENTS IN ECUADOR'S NATIONAL SECURITY PLANNING. PRESUMABLY THEY HAVE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH SALVADOR BEFORE NAMING HIM FOREIGN MINISTER. HOWEVER, GIVEN THE FRAGMENTED NATURE OF THE ECUADOREAN POLITICAL SYSTEM AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE SUPREME COUNCIL IN IMPROVING ITS WILL ON THE MINISTRIES AND BUREAURCRACY, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW SALVADOR'S APPOINTMENT WILL AFFECT THE FUTURE BEHAVIOR OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WITH RESPECT TO OUR SPECIFIC INTERESTS.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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